The

THOREAU SOCIETY BULLETIN

The Thoreau Society, Inc. is an informal gathering of students and followers of Henry David Thoreau. William Howarth, Princeton, N. J., President; Mrs. Charles MacPherson, Acton, Mass., Vice-President; and Walter Harding, State Univ., Geneseo, N. Y., 14454, Secretary-Treasurer. Annual membership $2.00; life membership, $50.00. Address communications to the secretary.

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IMPROVED MEANS TO AN UNIMPROVED END by Herbert Uhlig

Eight years before Henry Thoreau saw the light of day in his beloved Concord, "in the nick of time" as he said, Charles Darwin was born in Shrewsbury, England on February 12, 1809. Both men were destined to influence the outlook of mankind; both reached a far distance beyond the horizon of their own generation. They had many traits in common. Both were inborn students of nature and collectors of specimens. Both spent many of their waking hours in solitary walks and in the business of thinking and writing. Each left a legacy of books and manuscripts still relevant today. Loren Eiseley[1] described them as voyagers: "One confined himself to the ever-widening ripples on a pond until they embraced infinity. The other went around the world and remained for the rest of his life a meditative recluse ---." As idealists, both were concerned with searching out the basic meaning of life and what it had to teach us. Each was a professed theist in his own peculiar way; both rejected institutionalized religion, but probably for the wrong reasons. Neither for example was attracted to the practices of 19th Century ritualism, but neither, on the other hand, really understood the underlying Christian message and its relation to the slow improvement (evolution) of the human condition, in which both expressed faith.

Darwin's "Voyage of a Naturalist Round the World," describing his creative scientific observations in botany, zoology and geology had come to Thoreau's attention. Thoreau quoted from it several times in his Journal. But the revolutionary "Origin of Species" published in 1859 that "convulsed society," as one writer expressed it, appeared too late to draw more than a passing comment from Thoreau, or to have influenced his writings. There is no evidence, perhaps not surprisingly, that Darwin had ever read any of Thoreau. Darwin was born too soon. There would undoubtedly have been an interesting interaction had the two men gotten to know each other - Darwin the methodical, painstaking scientist and Thoreau the dedicated naturalist-philosopher.

Darwin was influenced in early life by the popular writings of Thomas Malthus decrying the burgeoning and proliferating world population in the midst of a limited food supply. Darwin concluded that the struggle for existence described by Malthus, when interpreted broadly, extended to all plants and animals; it had in fact operated over many millenia as a major factor in controlling the population growth of existing species. There were in general, he said, more individuals born at any one time than could possibly survive. He quoted figures showing that civilized human populations in the mid-1800's were doubling every 25 years. At this rate, he pointed out, the population of the United States, then at thirty million, would in 657 years cover the whole terraqueous globe so thickly that no less than four persons would be forced to stand on each square yard of surface - an obvious bit of crowding. This extreme situation implied either the necessity of a decreasing birth rate, or only partial survival of those who were born, or both. For most of the animal kingdom, said Darwin, a high death rate was commonplace; survival was reserved only for those best fitted to meet the challenge of their changing environment, a process that with each generation continuously improved the species. Darwin called this process evolution by natural selection. As naturalist on the "Beagle" he had first recognized evidence for it on many of the islands and continents he visited. All of the observable variations of plants and animals, and their progression with time, occurred not by blind chance, he explained further, but rather through the operation of a prescribed set of natural laws which governed the universe. Man, like his animal neighbors, had also progressed to his present advanced condition through a struggle for survival, and, Darwin[2] pointed out, if man was to advance still further "-- it is to be feared that he must remain subject to a severe struggle. Otherwise he will sink into indolence and the more gifted men would not be more successful in the battle of life than the less gifted. Hence our natural rate of increase, though leading to many and obvious evils, must not be greatly diminished by any means. There should be open competition for all men; and the most able should not be prevented by laws or customs from succeeding best and rearing the largest number of offspring." This was a seeming caution to birth-control advocates, but he modified his statement by what he said next. "Important as the struggle for existence has been and even still is, yet as far as the highest part of man's nature is concerned there are other agencies more important. For the moral qualities are advanced either directly or indirectly much more through the effects of habit, the reasoning powers, instruction, religion, etc. than through natural selection; though to this latter agency may be safely attributed the social instincts which afforded the basis for the development of the moral sense." This expression appears in Darwin's "Descent of Man," a book which was published after Thoreau's death. In this same reference Darwin further stressed that in human development:[3] "The moral faculties are generally and justly esteemed as of higher value than the intellectual powers." True as this is, it has since been made clear by biologists and social scientists that the more important agencies referred to by Darwin are not transmitted to future generations genetically as much as by cultural inheritance through language and the written record. His own postulate leads up to this point of view. The unique evolution of man, in other words, unlike that of other animals is not dependent on slow biological change, hence Darwin's statement concerning the need to maintain

the level of human population, or at least not decrease it, in order to insure continuing progress was open to challenge. His emphasis, nevertheless, was well placed that any optimum of total world population at any point in time, including the present, depends on many complex factors and is not easily assessed. Man of necessity, whatever the population level, is destined to struggle and to evolve. One of the prime objectives of human struggle, as he correctly summarized, is moral growth rather than physical or mental development - parenthetically an objective of most religions, but seldom associated with Darwin's name. With events in Washington and the rest of the country as distressing as they now are, it has become painfully evident to what extent moral factors as compared to intellectual factors determine the state of the nation.

Henry Thoreau would probably have agreed with Darwin, although he knew little or nothing of formal evolutionary theory. He nevertheless sensed some of the laws of nature that had influenced Darwin's thinking. In Walden[4] he remarked concerning himself: "Here is life, an experiment to a great extent untried by me --." And he pointed out in his Journal:[5] "You must try a thousand themes before you find the right one, as nature makes a thousand acorns to get one oak." On viewing a sequence of reflections from White Pond, he mused: "I doubt if you can ever get nature to repeat herself exactly."[6] Darwin had gone further in this concept and applied it to the makeup of plants and animals in general. All individuals, he pointed out, including human beings, are unique in some detail, and as different from one another as fingerprints. An individual, no matter how large the population from which he derives, is proof that nature is not apt to repeat herself - the individual has never been seen before and it is not likely that he will ever be seen again - a sobering thought to those who place a cheap price on life. It is this inevitable variation in the characteristics of all individuals, and the favored transmission (genetically and culturally) of the most advantageous of their traits that make possible the slow evolution of mankind. And with respect to the continuing struggle and competition emphasized by Darwin, Thoreau concurs: "That aim in life is highest which requires the highest and finest discipline."[7] He was stating one of the principles that in several variations was to appear later as part of Darwin's writings. But Thoreau went beyond Darwin: "To affect the quality of the day," he said, "that is the highest of arts."[8]

Referring to man's slow but successful upward progression, Darwin cautioned: "-- that with all these exulted powers - man still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin."[9] Thoreau thought along parallel lines: "We are conscious of an animal in us which awakens in proportion as our higher nature slumbers."[10] But Henry apparently thought less of Malthus than did his renowned contemporary. "In spite of Malthus and the rest," he said with characteristic bluntness, "there will be plenty of room in this world if every man will mind his own business. I have not heard of any planet running against another yet."[11] In other words, the cosmos was forging ahead in self-consistent harmony as it had for a long time past, and it ill behooved anyone to yell out in sudden fear because he couldn't see anyone in the driver's seat. Henry's intuitive trust in nature and her laws made him confident. His concern was with the damaging attitude and sorry neglect of certain members of the human family rather than with any damage that might result from sheer numbers of human beings.

Unlike Charles Darwin who was concerned mostly with the impact of the environment on man, Thoreau was concerned with the impact of man on the environment and with the ultimate effect of a man-altered environment on man himself. He expressed the thought that it was not sufficient to scientifically explore new phenomena independent of the relation of such phenomena to people. "The important part," he said, "is its (i.e. the phenomenon's) effect on me."[12] He had very little use for the accumulation of dry scientific minutiae that lost sight of the overall view - that missed the forest for the trees. As if to illustrate his point he claimed it served no purpose to climb a mountain and miss the glorious view by looking through a telescope and counting the already familiar meeting houses below.[13] He had no patience with a so-called scientific study of man which consisted of filling a human skull with a measured amount of mustard seed and from the derived cranial capacity extrapolating to some measure of man himself. "You would learn more" he concluded with dry Concordian humor, "by once paring the toenails of the living subject."[14] Much of science by this type of approach was to him the study of a dead language. And in seeming forewarning to Darwin who derived support for his theory of evolution by the presence of fossilized extinct animals of graded complexity in various strata of the earth, Thoreau remarked: "The earth is not -- a mere fragment of dead history, strata upon strata, like the leaves of a book, an object for a museum and an antiquarian, but living poetry, like the leaves of a tree - not a fossil earth, but a living specimen."[15] There he had the crux of the matter - poetry versus dead facts; purpose and significance versus unrelated detail.

"Obey the law which reveals," he recommended, "and not the law revealed."[16] Darwin in a sense was obeying both. By carefully describing the detailed story revealed by his systematic factual studies, analyses and classifications, he was helping to repudiate the mechanistic, deterministic science of the 19th century to which Thoreau objected, and to favor the introduction of the more enlightened, freedom-imparting, philosophical science of the 20th century. This was in the right direction, as subsequent events proved.

To whatever extent Thoreau may have deprecated the futility of what he knew about 19th century science, he saw even more clearly the negative influence of a technology, or a science, applied without regard to its impact on the quality of life - a situation he termed "improved means to an unimproved end."[17] He questioned a civilization that succeeds in improving houses but not equally the people who live in them. He saw no sense in going faster and more comfortably nowhere in particular, and he said so. Among many apparent needs, he wanted to see means of transportation that when the smoke cleared had not run over more people than had been carried - a prophetic condemnation of the proliferating automobiles and trucks that seriously pollute the only air for life to breathe, and of the raucous jet planes that destroy the quality of life for many more thousands of the population than they carry as passengers. Who rides over whom? The president of General Motors in a recent statement expressed the opinion: "We must have more technology - technology that is better directed and that considers the total impact on Society of its dynamic changes."[18] Whether he knew it nor not, he was approaching Henry David Thoreau's viewpoint 125 years late.

The goals of Society are what count, said Henry, not the distracting gadgetry and the momentary

conveniences. An overall view of sensible direction must be sought out from a point high above the valleys of humdrum routine. "It is complacent to settle for material progress in machines," Eiseley agreed,[19] "while we stifle the spiritual aspirations for the 'kingdom within' that all the world's great moral teachers have sought to instill into their followers." In a recent book, the scientist Konrad Lorenz[20] walks with Thoreau by pointing out that one of civilized man's eight deadly sins is his race against himself, which pushes the development of technology to an even faster pace, blinding him to real values, and robbing him of time for reflection. In an address before the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Joseph Krutch[21] explained that Thoreau's "-- concept of the 'good life' may be incomplete. Some may think it is totally mistaken. But one thing is certain, the irreducible minimum of truth in his message is simple - that we should be goal oriented; and that the goal is the good life - not wealth nor power nor even knowledge for its own sake. Thinking that we should have them for their own sakes is exactly the mistake the age of technology and science is inclined to make." And this is not all; history teaches us that past civilizations have foundered on trivial goals, the wrong goals or no goals at all. Only by recognizing the validity of Thoreau's basic message did Krutch "think it possible, just possible, that we might save our own civilization."

Thoreau, to whatever degree he was and is still misunderstood, was not fundamentally opposed to all progress. He accepted a new route when it was clearly indicated that it represented the best route. The Thoreau family in their business of pencil-making had not hesitated to use the best available technology to grade the particle size of graphite for their superior pencils, and Henry participated in seeking out the needed technical improvements. He admitted that in general "-- it certainly is better to accept the advantages, though so dearly bought, which the invention and industry of man offer."[22] Boards, shingles, lime, and bricks, he pointed out, are more easily obtained for housing than suitable caves or whole logs or bark. "With a little more wit," he wryly concluded, "we might make -- our civilization a blessing."[23]

Whatever individual differences they exhibited in their approach to nature, Darwin the scientist and Thoreau the philosopher converged in their optimistic look ahead. Darwin in his Autobiography, thinking about the reasons for being, felt that despite the obvious struggle for survival, and perhaps even more because of it: "Some other considerations -- lead to the belief that all sentient beings have been formed so as to enjoy as a general rule, happiness."[24] Thoreau concurred and was willing to extend this principle to non-sentient beings: "Do you think," he asked, "that the Concord River would have continued to flow these millions of years by Clamshell Hill and round Hunt's Island if it had not been happy - if it had been miserable in its channel, tired of existence, and cursing its maker and the hour that it sprang?"[25] His was a broad definition which encompassed stones, walnut shells, wood, earth and mould - all made, he said, for happiness. If I understand his point, Thoreau was simply paraphrasing Genesis which describes the newly created Cosmos in terms of "God saw it was good." Darwin, of course, was saying much the same thing.

The latter continuing on his optimistic note wrote: "-- man in the distant future will be a far more perfect creature than he now is."[26] Henry independently said similarly: "I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor."[27] He had in a sense answered the question about the purpose of life he early sought - man was actually free to elevate his sights - wasn't that purpose enough? Darwin's followers were to say later that man had arrived at that stage of development where he was able to direct in part his own continuing evolution. Thoreau would have agreed, but he would, I think, have insisted that it was not evolution of itself that counts. Anyone can willy-nilly choose a different road or destroy a traditional route. It is important, he would have emphasized, to choose the right route leading to sensible values and worthwhile goals - to use improved means, of course, but only to improved ends.

NOTES: [1]"The Unexpected Universe," Loren Eiseley, p. 120-1, Harcourt, Brace and World, N.Y., 1964. [2]"Descent of Man," p. 919, Modern Library, N.Y. [3]Ibid., p. 913. [4]"Walden," p. 17, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1893. [5]"The Journal of Henry D. Thoreau," B. Torrey and F. Allen, II - 457. [6]X - 97. [7]IV - 433. [8]"Walden," p. 143. [9]"Descent of Man," p. 920. [10]"Walden," p. 341. [11]X - 191. [12]X - 165. [13]IV - 392. [14]IV - 147. [15]VI - 99, 100. [16]II - 171. [17]"Walden," p. 84. [18]Quoted in "Metal Progress," p. 41, Nov. 1973. [19]"Darwin's Century," Loren Eiseley, p. 346, Doubleday and Co., N.Y., 1958. [20]"Civilized Man's Eight Deadly Sins," Konrad Lorenz, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., N.Y., 1973. [21]Bulletin, The Am. Acad. Arts and Sciences, XXI, No. 1, Oct. 1967. [22]"Walden," p. 65. [23]Ibid., p. 66. [24]"The Autobiography of Charles Darwin," p. 88, Harcourt, Brace and World, N.Y. [25]IX - 206, 207. [26]"Autobiography," p. 92. [27]"Walden," p. 142.

HENRY THOREAU, CONCORD, MASS. by Raymond Adams

For a while I should like to keep Thoreau in Concord. That should be an easy thing to do. He had almost no desire to leave Concord except for what are called excursions; and when in 1843 it seemed that possibly he might make his living outside Concord, he wrote back from Staten Island to his mother, "Methinks I should be content to sit at the back door in Concord, under the poplar tree, henceforth forever." And at once he adds, "Not that I am homesick at all." Oh no, not homesick at all, only bereaved and longing with deep longing for his mother and father and his sisters, and for the Parkman house where they lived, and for the town of Concord where before the year was out he would return for his lifetime and in many ways until now.

He was back in Concord by that year's end with what must have been a new appreciation of the town. With the prodigal (though he had not wasted any substance in riotous living on Staten Island) he felt the joy of home. Now he belonged to Concord, and Concord should belong to him. He would live here now and write that poem he had projected two years before:

> I think I could write a poem to be called 'Concord. For argument I should have the River, the Woods, the Ponds, the Hills, the Fields, the Swamps and Meadows, the Streets and Buildings, and the Villagers. Then Morning, Noon and Evening, Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter, Night, Indian Summer, and the Mountains in the Horizon.

He wrote that poem; but first in the best tradition of authorship he lived it; and when part of it was printed and published, it was called Walden.

Surely we do not need to trace the gathering of

materials for his poem "Concord," the ten thousand days of going in all seasons to all parts of the town, enjoying and absorbing, recording, and returning time after time until the geography of this little place became his continent, even his world, but remained to him still not a world but a neighborhood, a group of places here in town that were friends and were called by affectionate names: Eagle Field, the Lupine Promontory, Grape Cliff, Gentian Lane, Wheeler's Owl Wood, Cardinal Shore, and a hundred other place-friends to be visited for their latest gossip until at last he should come to a celestial Fair Haven.

As with places, so with plants and animals. It was "my owl-nest oak" because the tree was special to him, his friend and at the same time the home of another friend, the owl, his owl probably, for he made everything personal to him. But this came gradually. I cannot think that little "Trainer" Thoreau (for so they called him) was any more an observer of nature than were the other boys with whom he played. Of course they observed the ice for purposes of skating, and the temperature of the water for purposes of wading and swimming, and the ripeness of the huckleberries and apples for purposes of eating - boys' pragmatic observations. I expect his observing grew much as did that of the child in Whitman's poem "There Was a Child Went Forth," who expanded his observations and appreciations through the years: at first only the bright flowers near the doorstep, and then the barnyard, and then the pond beyond the barn, the orchard, the fields, and at last the people along the road. "Trainer" Thoreau's observations must have expanded in range and depth like that. He indicates as much early in the "Higher Laws" chapter of Walden:

> Perhaps I have owed to this employment /fishing/ and to hunting, when quite young, my closest acquaintance with Nature. They early introduce us to and detain us in scenery with which otherwise, at that age, we should have little acquaintance. Fishermen, hunters, wood-choppers, and others, spending their lives in the fields and woods, in a peculiar sense a part of Nature themselves, are often in a more favorable mood for observing her, in the intervals of their pursuits, than philosophers or poets even.
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> . . . .
>
> Such is oftenest the young man's introduction to the forest, and the most original part of himself. He goes thither at first as a hunter and fisher, until at last, if he has the seeds of a better life in him, he distinguishes his proper objects, as a poet or naturalist it may be, and leaves the gun and fishpole behind.

Whitman's child who went forth - and the child was Whitman himself - never became the observer that "Trainer" Thoreau grew into. Both were poets, but Thoreau was the better naturalist. Poet-Naturalist is a good designation for him since he poetized much that he observed; and he observed assiduously. One December, 1856, passage from his journal will reveal how assiduously and with what personal interest he tended his landscape. It was his landscape, for, as Emerson said, the poet owns the landscape no matter which man owns this field or that hill:

> I wanted to know my neighbors, if possible, - to get a little nearer to them. I soon found myself observing when plants first blossomed and leafed, and I followed it up early and late, far and near, several years in succession, running to different sides of the town and into the neighboring towns, often between twenty and thirty miles in a day. I often visited a particular plant four or five miles distant, half a dozen times within a fortnight, that I might know exactly when it opened, besides attending to a great many others in different directions and some of them equally distant, at the same time. At the same time I had an eye for birds and whatever else might offer.

Has anyone mentioned Thoreau's tirelessness? Twenty or thirty miles in a day seemed to him but an easy walk; five or six miles across country to keep track of a plant about to blossom was like going next door to ask a neighbor about the state of his raspberries. I cannot remember that he ever, except in his latest months, mentioned getting tired or becoming bored. That blossom that opened on the fifth or sixth visit in a fortnight opened to him with as fresh interest as if it had not been expected but was suddenly discovered - some orchid, some century plant that had never been seen there before. Unwearied, indefatigable, he threaded these woods and fields eagerly and as easily as if there were paths everywhere and no fences.

Is there a clue here toward an answer to Lowell's criticism?

> Neither his attention nor his genius was of the spontaneous kind. He discovered nothing. He thought everything a discovery of his own, from moonlight to the planting of acorns and nuts by squirrels.

(That's a strange comment about one who wrote "The Succession of Forest Trees" and discovered not only how trees got planted but how the kinds succeeded one another.) But back to Lowell's disparagement: If one goes four or five miles to visit a particular plant half a dozen times within a fortnight and feels no wearisomeness, no dullness of repetition the fifth or sixth time, then he is blessed not only with tireless physical energy but with a tireless mental anticipation, with "an infinite expectation of the dawn." In that dawn - that "Inward Morning" - the flower that had opened in the night will uncover itself, will discover itself, as if it were the first flower, will in a real sense have been discovered by the observer who was prepared to discover it. This is a kind of discovery that Lowell omitted to mention. Thoreau said some people are accounted half-witted because they are really once-and-a-half-witted. So there are things in nature that Wordsworth's Peter Bell would merely look at, but that a once-and-a-half-witted watcher will see with newly discovering eyes. It is easy for the first observer to know that he has seen something new, though he may be very stolid in the reporting of it. It takes a special quality of mind, a once-and-a-half appreciation, to feel the freshness of discovery and to report it so about things that would be commonplace to the common man. That marks the difference between prose and poetry. And Thoreau was a poet.

Lowell himself somewhat grudgingly admits the value in a writer of this fresh approach. Having said that Thoreau discovered nothing but thought everything a discovery of his own, he hastens to add that "this is a defect in his character but one of his chief charms as a writer," and then proceeds to find some other defects of Thoreau's character and writing. We might debate that, but I think Thoreau's merits as a writer have pretty well established themselves by now. On the pages he wrote he moves within the language as easily as he moved within the town of Concord, tirelessly and with zest. Allusions and quotations from old and new literature drop naturally into his sentences. We could wish that he had used American writers more, but his academic background did not suggest them. Quoting American authors was not the

done thing at Harvard in the 1830's, nor in Concord Academy either. So it is the ancient and English writers that supply most of the material; but they drop into his paragraphs easily and without conscious effort. Because of Chalmers's The English Poets the the seventeenth century is well represented. And because of the current transcendentalism there are more references to Oriental literature than there might otherwise be. His references, even if derived from the schools, are marvelously apt and remarkably wide ranging.

I wanted to keep Thoreau in Concord, and that reading has little to do with the town. Concord Lyceum, one of the best in the country, was here, and its lecturer's and debaters were often local men. Emerson and Alcott and Hawthorne were here. But what I am looking for is the Concord tone in Thoreau's prose. That's elusive and does not have many written and firm sources that one can cite. So one can speculate, and not unsatisfyingly. Thoreau, of course, spoke the dialect of Concord. It was a more distinct dialect then than it is now. There are some hints about it. Emerson wrote "There the embattled farmers stood" and rhymed the last word with "flood." George F. Hoar said of the boys of Thoreau's and his own generation, "Whenever they thought fit they could use as good language as anybody; but their speech with one another was in the racy, pithy Yankee dialect, which Lowell has made immortal in the 'Biglow Papers'." So Thoreau talked (for he was a good talker) to the men and boys of Concord in their own language. I expect he talked with them more often than did Emerson or Hawthorne, for his interests were their interests and his rough clothes were like their clothes and he was out where they were. They in turn talked freely to him for they held him in no awe. He was their kind of man but in an impractical way, so they could talk with him, and on what seemed to them practical matters talk down to him a bit. Once in a while he quotes them directly because the encounter brought from them the very best phrases to fit the occasion. That was part of his theory of effective diction. He and they talked to each other in their mother tongue, not the language of books but the language of their Concord mothers and fathers, and of their grandmothers and grandfathers too, for a family accumulates phrases and a town accumulates phrases, and these contribute to the mother tongue - or grandmother tongue. As long as he quoted his townsmen directly we can know these Concord phrases. Part of the time an allusion will identify them. His lyceum audiences and his Concord readers in his own time recognized many more. Surely we miss most of his phrases in the grandmother tongue of Concord. I am sure they are there, embedded too deep for us.

Thoreau wondered at the end of Walden whether John or Jonathan would understand his book. He need not have wondered about Jonathan. Jonathan knew its language, he had heard parts of the book as lectures, he had talked with the author on the Milldam or outside the village, and he had his own ideas about the life at Walden Pond. He would understand the book all right, though he still might think David Henry (as he called him) was more than a little impractical.

If that were all, Henry Thoreau would have been a parochial writer indeed, one of the local naturalists who seem to have abounded in New England, contributing specimens to the "cabinets" and reporting to the neighborhood natural history societies, those antecedents of the lyceums. He might, now and then, even have been a local talent speaker at the lyceum.

But that was not all, as we know very well. Somehow, from local sources and elsewhere, he had become a master of language and moved as freely through all its areas as he did along the back ways and crosslots of the Concord countryside. He wrote with delight - the only good way - and I do not recall a tired paragraph. He seems to have approached composition with confidence and to have had endless resources available. One critic says he used "the whole arsenal of wit: puns, extravagance, parody, satire." He used happy comparisons, and his metaphors rise into symbolism. His allusions fall naturally into place - sometimes a phrase out of the "grandmother tongue" of Concord, sometimes a direct quotation from one of the ends of the earth, and very often word from the earth itself as he had heard it in Concord.

Think of what a good time he had writing those two paragraphs in Walden that must be the most anthologized of all his prose: the paragraph beginning "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately" and the next one beginning "Still we live meanly, like ants." They are serious passages, the very themes of the book; yet he lightens them with puns and paradoxes and metaphors without once taking away from the seriousness and importance of the ideas of individual simplification and protest against social exploitation.

Think of the risk of playing with the paradox of coming to die only to discover that one had not lived and following that with the perennial Milldam comment that "living is so dear." Anyone who had cut meadow hay in Concord understood what importance and efficiency there was in the desire "to cut a broad swath and shave close." Then there is the elaborate metaphor of calling railway "sleepers" men who submit to being exploited because they are not awake enough to assert themselves. Those things could have cheapened the key paragraphs and dulled the point Thoreau must make. He took the risk and was so much the master of his medium that instead of making the paragraphs frivolous, he made them buoyant. That buoyancy floats them, reflects the pleasure with which they were written, impresses them upon the reader's mind, and lands them in all the anthologies at last.

There is no formula for such writing. Phineas Allen in his academy did not teach young Thoreau how to write that way, nor did Edward Channing at Harvard, nor neighbor Emerson by the example of his own essays. Genius enters here; and teachers and examples and books and Concord environment and grandmother tongue can add to but cannot dictate or change the paragraphs the writer's genius has made.

Thoreau wrote in the first person and thus seems to address the individual reader while taking personal responsibility for his exaggerations and whimsies. They are his braggings to wake his neighbors up. He presents his ideas and criticisms in all seriousness, lightens them with the play of humor and figurative language, steadies them by putting them down on home ground, easily mingles the language of books and schools with the speech of the town of Concord, and seldom goes much farther from the poplar tree at the back door than to the town line toward Lincoln or Acton or Sudbury. So he is a master of the familiar essay. In the heyday of the essay in English he was, I think, the best essayist America has had.

THE 1974 ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Thoreau Society was held in the First Parish Church in Concord, Mass., on Saturday, July 13, 1974. President Herbert H. Uhlig presided

at the business meeting which began at 10:15 a.m. The minutes of the 1973 meeting were accepted as printed in the Summer, 1973, BULLETIN. Walter Harding presented the following treasurer's report:

Balance on Hand as of June 15, 1973		$3,623.45
Receipts		
Dues	$1,496.50	
Sale of back copies	154.60	
Life memberships	350.00	
Royalties	98.80	
Gifts	54.00	
Sale of Luncheon tickets	457.50	
	$2,611.40	2,611.40
		$6,234.85
Expenses		
Annual Meeting	$ 928.57	
Postage & Handling	547.83	
Printing	432.70	
Miscellaneous	135.69	
	$1,267.72	1,267.72
BALANCE ON HAND AS OF JUNE 4, 1974		$4,967.13
The Hoover Fund now stands at $7,857.00		

Mary Gail Fenn, for the nominating committee presented the following slate of officers which was accepted and the nominees declared elected: for president, William Howarth, Princeton, N.J.; for president-elect, Eugene Walker, Concord, Mass.; for vice-president, Mrs. Charles MacPherson, Acton, Mass. for secretary-treasurer, Walter Harding, Geneseo, N.Y., all for terms of one year; and for members of the executive committee for three years: Samuel Wellman, Willoughby, Ohio, and Robert Wild, Newton, Mass.

The secretary announced the gift to the Thoreau Society Archives by Mrs. Leslie Anderson of Concord of her large scrapbook of clippings and photographs pertaining to Thoreau and to the early history of the society. He also announced the gift by Mrs. William Ferry of Scarsdale, N.Y., of the sum of $5000 for the housing, cataloging, and continuation of her late husband Daniel Bernstein's collection of periodicals pertaining to Thoreau (the gift of which was announced in the Spring, 1974, BULLETIN). At the request of the executive committee resolutions of appreciation and thanks have been forwarded to Mrs. Anderson and Mrs. Ferry.

On the recommendation of the executive committee, the society voted to set aside up to $500 for secretarial assistance to Mrs. Marcia Moss, the society archivist, in her preparation of a catalog of Thoreau's surveys now in the Concord Free Public Library. The society also voted to alot a sum approximating $300 for the restoration and preservation of the Fred Hosmer Thoreau scrapbooks also in the Concord Free Public Library. It was also recommended that these scrapbooks be microfilmed.

The business meeting was followed by addresses by Raymond Adams on "Henry D. Thoreau, Concord, Mass." and Herbert Uhlig on "Improved Means to an Unimproved End;" a luncheon, and overview of plans for the restoration of Walden Pond by Richard A. Gardiner, Inc. Associates; a forum discussion of plans for the restoration of Walden; a stroll to the Calf Pasture led by Mrs. Edmund Fenn; a walk through Sleepy Hollow Cemetery led by Robert Needham; a tour of Concord Free Public Library led by Mrs. Marcia Moss; a box supper at the Concord Lyceum; and slides of Monadnock and Katahdin by Paul Williams. The meeting was brought to a close by the traditional presentation of the gavel to the in-coming president, William Howarth, by the out-going president Herbert Uhlig.

ADDITIONS TO THE THOREAU BIBLIOGRAPHY.....WH (TJQ: Thoreau Journal Quarterly, P.O. Box 551, Old Town, Me. 04468; CS: Concord Saunterer, 156 Belknap St., Concord, Mass. 01742; TD: Twisted Dial, Box 65, Holcomb, N.Y. 14469. Asterisked items are reviewed below.)

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CURRENT THOREAU LITERATURE.....WH

Paul Boller's American Transcendentalism is the first book-length "intellectual history" of Transcendentalism since Frothingham's study of more than a century ago. It is particularly lucid in its analysis of the philosophical and theological backgrounds of the movement (but weaker in its discussion of the ideas of the movement itself). It is straightforward and unpretentious and written with a sense of humor as well as seriousness. Thoreau is cited on nearly every page. We regret though that there are no footnotes to enable a student to track down his multitudinous quotations....Don't miss Mary Russell Watson's reminiscences of Thoreau edited by Tom Blanding in the June Concord Saunterer....The Grand Monadnock, catalog of an exhibition on the mountain held in Keene this summer, is almost as good as the exhibition itself....William Howarth's Literary Manuscripts of Henry David Thoreau is a volume which no serious student of Thoreau can do without. It is a catalog of all known literary manuscripts (letters, surveys, receipts, etc. are excluded) of Thoreau, indicating their present location and their place in both the Thoreau chronology and the Thoreau canon and giving a brief physical description. Since Thoreau manuscripts are scattered to the four winds, this volume is essential to anyone making a serious study of his manuscripts. Added bonuses are that many puzzling manuscripts are now at last identified as to their place in the canon, the interrelationships of many manuscripts are identified through cross-references, and a special table of cross references between the writings and journal (supplementing by reversal that in the 1906 edition) is included.

Special note should also be made of the section untangling the complex "Moon" and "Moonlight" manuscripts....Kimberly-Clark's Thoughts on Thoreau, while ostensibly an advertising portfolio for their new "Thoreau vellum" paper, includes a beautifully done pamphlet of Thoreau quotations and a series of amusing letterheads for Thoreau as pencil-maker, bird-watcher, etc.....Somehow we missed Krasemann's Thoreau Revisited when it first came out, but now it is remaindered at about half the price. It is a gorgeous collection of colored photographs accompanied by appropriate quotations from Thoreau's and Krasemann's own nature journals....One might think offhand that Thoreau was so anti-church that there would be little point in devoting a whole book to his religious beliefs, but William Wolf's Thoreau: Mystic Prophet Ecologist demonstrates that Thoreau had a great deal of significance to say about religion and said it well. He was basically a deeply religious man. His disillusionment was with the church establishment, not with the ideals.

EVENTS AT WALDEN.....WH

After years of discussion, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts transferred control of the Walden Pond State Reservation from the Commissioners of Middlesex County to the State Department of Natural Resources in a ceremony at the pond on July 26, 1974--the transfer to become effective on Jan. 1, 1975. It is expected that this will eventually mean the restoration of the entire path edge around the pond that is now suffering badly from erosion, removal of the present bathhouses and concrete pier, construction of a new bathhouse and a new parking lot away from the pond's edge, re-locating of Route 126 further from the pond, construction of a visitor's center. Many of these plans may take some years to be fulfilled, but in general more thoughtful care of the area can be anticipated.

But right on top of that good news come two pieces of bad news. The bronze plaque placed at the cabin site in 1968 by the Thoreau Society through the generosity of Sam Wellman was stolen on August 9. Fortunately it was recovered, undamaged, by the police and will soon be restored to the site. Even worse news is that plans are under way for Ramada Inns to build a motel and convention center at the intersection of Walden Street and Route 2, only a few hundred feet from the boundary of the State Reservation.

NOTES AND QUERIES

We are indebted to the following for information supplied for this bulletin: E. Allison, T. Bailey, T. Balaam, W. Bottorff, A. Butler, M. Campbell, R. Chapman, W. Cummings, J. Donovan, R. Epler, M. Fenn, F. Flack, M. Flak, H. Gottschalk, B. Gronewald, D. Hannan, G. Hasenauer, K. Hauber, E. Johnson, D. Kamen-Kaye, K. Kasengawa, A. Kovar, M. Manning, L. Miller, E. Mobley, F. Moore, R. Needham, P. Oehser, J. Pontin, L. Rathbun, R. Schaedle, L. Shanley, E. Teale, C. Tweedy, H. VanFleet, J. Vickers, D. Watt, R. Welch, S. Wellman, P. Williams, J. Witler, and W. Younglove. Please keep the secretary informed of items he has missed and new ones as they appear.

August Black asks us if anyone can identify the source of this in Thoreau: "The groves were God's first temples. But the woodman is preparing to lay his ax at the root of that also." Dorothy Kamen-Kaye asks where Thoreau speaks of "coasting towards the shores of spring." And Charles Tweedy asks where Thoreau says, "Man's moral nature is a riddle which only eternity can solve."

Mary Gail ("Fuzzy") Fenn has recently written a number of articles for the Concord Journal on interesting historic sites in the town (for example, one on June 27, 1974 on "The Estabrook Woods"), many of which point out their Thoreau associations.

Jack Friend Productions, Inc. (P.O. Box 36, Chicago, 60690) have recently produced a 28 minute sound film entitled "Henry David Thoreau: A Mile from Any Neighbor."

The Japanese Thoreau Society will hold its meeting on Oct. 11, 1974 at Tohoku University in Sendai.

At the Watergate "plumbers" trial in Washington in July a defense lawyer, citing Thoreau, claimed, of all things, his clients were "listening to a different drummer."

An original play, "Henry David Thoreau," by Bruce Reasman was recently produced at the William Taft High School in Woodland Hills, Calif.

A manuscript page of Thoreau's lecture on "Life without Principle" was recently offered for sale for $1200. The same price was asked for one of his autographed college textbooks, and a rent receipt he signed for his Aunt Maria was priced at $650.

Folk-rock-singer Chris Smithers features a song entitled "Henry David Thoreau" which describes him as the "swingin'est transcendentalating cat alive."

The August, 1974, Playboy includes a short story by Jim Hougan entitled "Thoreau Never Mentioned the Damn Bugs!" but otherwise has little to do with HDT.

A play entitled "Waldo" by Phillip Whidden on the relationship of Thoreau, Emerson, and young Waldo Emerson was recently produced at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Mich.

A jazz magazine published in Rochester, N.Y., is entitled "Different Drummer." And Random House publishes a college freshman English text with the same title.

The June 1974 Harvard Magazine prints comparative translations from Homer's Iliad by Chapman, Pope, Thoreau, Tennyson, Richmond Lattimore and Robert Fitzgerald.

We understand that Thoreau was one of the earliest to make a reference in print to the game of baseball. Can anyone tell us where that reference is?

Argus Communications of Chicago has recently published two posters with quotations from Thoreau--"different drummer" and "a man is rich in proportion...."

J. Parker Herber and J. H. Fox of Eastern Connecticut State College have planned a college credit canoe tour entitled "Thoreau: The Maine Woods."

A photographic tour of Kansas City set to quotations from Thoreau was published in the April 14, 1974 Kansas City Star.

There were nearly 200 different productions of Lawrence and Lee's The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail in 1973.

The University of Massachusetts at Amherst now has a dormitory named after Thoreau.

Bainbridge Junior College in Bainbridge, Georgia, now offers a course in physical education entitled "Sauntering" and it is described in the college catalog as "Brief excursions extolling the virtues of walking for pleasure and physical fitness. Weekly lectures and laboratory sessions on the life and letters of Henry David Thoreau, nature and environment study, and the interaction between ecological and human systems are provided in team teaching sessions.

"There is no remedy for love but to love more." HDT